

Jury Finds Ray Guilty In Escape

WARTBURG, Tenn. (UPI) — James Earl Ray was found guilty Thursday night of breaking out of the Tennessee prison where he is serving 99 years for the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Ray remained emotionless when the nine-man, three-woman jury returned the verdict after deliberating two hours, 55 minutes. He received an additional one to two years on his sentence, but the jury could have added as many as five years.

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Ray Convicted in Escape, Given 1- to 2-Year Term

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WARTBURG, Tenn. (AP)—James Earl Ray, serving a 99-year term for the killing of Martin Luther King, was convicted Thursday of escape for his breakout from a Tennessee prison last June.

The jury of nine men and three women returned the verdict after almost three hours of deliberation. They also imposed the minimum sentence allowed under state laws on escape—one to two years, to be served in addition to his regular sentence.

Prior to Thursday's conviction, Ray, 49, would have been eligible for parole in 1998.

Ray had testified Thursday, as the only defense witness, that he escaped in an effort to win a new trial for the 1968 slaying of King, to which he had originally pleaded guilty.

At the trial's outset Thursday morning, the judge rebuffed an attempt by Mark Lane, Ray's attorney, to discuss the King murder case and seated the jury.

Lane had argued that his client had been illegally confined and therefore was innocent of illegal escape. Lane had hoped to show that Ray was deprived of a fair trial in Memphis in 1969 when he pleaded guilty in a court in Shelby County to the 1968 King slaying.